

40 feet by 14 feet, a chancel about 22 feet by 13 feet, a square tower and a north and south porch.

The nave and aisle were, and still remain, divided by three early painted arches resting on Saxon (or I should rather consider them Romanesque) pillars, having moulded caps and bases, but without carving, and the whole supporting a roof of solid oak, which also is still preserved. There were also windows of all dates, from the early cusped mullion down to the latest perpendicular.

The Chancel, to which I have more particularly devoted attention, was, I think, singular in some points, and curious in all. It had such a mixture of dilapidated dignity in its old features, and clumsy introduction of new ones, as to make one wish either that there were no such officials as churchwardens at all, or that they should be men of better minds.

The oak screen was not less remarkable for the strength and construction of its framework, than for the lightness and beauty of its carving. The massiveness of the former enabled it to withstand the effect of time or the rude hand of man; but of the finer parts only enough remained to indicate what it must have been, and enable the artist to develop them anew; some of these were found "used up" in other parts of the church "to patch a wall" or expel the winter's flaw. It consisted of three principal divisions, the two sides being divided into five compartments, each with moulded mullions, the lower ones inclosed with panels, and the upper ones open and terminating in very beautiful tracery. The middle compartment had an old ledged door, borrowed apparently from some outhouse in the neighbourhood, for it did not even fit the place. It was fastened by a padlock, and served to secure the miserable appendages of the church. These compartments were surmounted by a very bold cornice, in the hollow of which a rich vine-leaf ornament, strung as it were together by a twining rope or cord, was introduced. The top was quite bare, but had a groove, and by chance I met with two or three pointed finials, the tinned end of which upon trial was found to correspond with it.

I must not omit to mention a mistake into which I was likely to have been led by the ledged door just alluded to. It seemed very natural that a screen with a doorway should have a door, and I had proposed one to be made of corresponding character with the rest of the screen, and thought it worked out exceedingly fortunate, as it would just admit of three similar compartments: when I came, however, to examine how a door had been originally applied, I found not only that there had been no door, but that it had not been designed to have one, and that two grooves existed in the side posts, shewing that the head of this opening had also been finished by tracery, to which I subsequently found a sufficient clue. These grooves did not come down more than about 12 or 14 inches from the top, and there abruptly stopped.

I come, therefore, to the conclusion that this aperture, if it had any inclosure at all, had some kind of curtain. The chancel also contained some very interesting monuments of the Gore family, before mentioned, who once possessed the manor of Alderton. One of these deserves particular notice; and an altar tomb of more ancient date. This latter (probably of the 15th or 16th century) consists of a massive top having a moulded edge and supported by stone panels, divided into Gothic compartments, three of which have shields of an ancient character, attributed (from the hollow scoop on one side) to the time of the Crusades and Tournaments; and the only heraldic device being the chevron, traced in red colour across each shield.

The former monument has a sort of Elizabethan framework ornamented with angels' heads and other devices. Within this was an arched niche deeply recessed in the wall, and containing in alto-relief a figure in an attitude of earnest prayer before a table or altar supporting a book; but the figure was at the same time so gorgeously and quaintly dressed,

"With nip, and snip, and cut, and slash, and slish, Like to a censer in a barber's shop."

that one was at first inclined to smile at its inconsistency, especially as it was emblazoned in the colours of the rainbow.

I am, however, induced to believe that even this attempt of the sculptor, whoever he might be, reached what in our monumental works of this day is not always attained, viz. the comprehension of those to whom it was addressed.

It shewed first that the person referred to was one of rank and condition, and that his condition did not render him unmindful of his duty to his God! Some indeed might contend that this figure was not designed to represent the deceased person at all, but that of his surviving relative who was occupied in saying masses for the soul of the departed. I do not, however, think that was the case, and whether so or not it does not alter the general inference that the parties were not less dignified than devout.

But although the church retained these good memorials of bygone days, it was frightfully mutilated and disfigured by the misallied improvements of later times. Thus, the chancel roof, which had been of fine old oak, with collar beams or arched ribs greatly decayed by neglect of the tiling, had for its substitute a lath and plaster ceiling flat over the whole. It was deemed of little consequence that the head of the east window was clean cut off, nor that a bulk head filled up the great chancel arch. For all this mischief the amende was held to be some new square deal tablets with "Batty Langley" mouldings, and surmounted by a solid heart all on fire!

There is something lamentably deserving of notice in this, viz. that the very iconoclastic spirit which led to the mutilation and defacing and destruction, as idolatrous, of what was at least refined in its character and imagery, had run into the grosser error of symbolizing the flame of divine love by an coarse and clumsy device as this.

The mixed abuse and neglect of the chancel had naturally led to an equal malformation of the church: here and there would peep out a fine piece of old carved-work of various dates and styles, from the plain linen-pattern down to the most decorated English, but these for the most part were hacked and cut to pieces; while to the solid oak carved ends of the seats were hung dwarf ledged doors, exactly like those of the pig-styes in the village.

The south aisle was in a worse condition with respect to dilapidations; by the decay of the collar-beams, the roof had so bulged the walls by its lateral pressure, that but for the porch, which acted as a buttress, it would have long been a promiscuous heap.

In the nave was another indication of changeful times. The font had evidently stood at one time on the north side of the west pillar, thus presenting itself towards the chief door of entrance. This might be gleaned from the existence of a wrought-iron bracket, which had no doubt once suspended an ancient cover. The cover, however, at the time I speak of, was exactly like a copper lid, and the bracket was used to carry a common glazed street lamp to "light up" the church.

The feature of most "pomp and circumstance" was a large square family pew, I believe the churchwarden's: it was raised on a platform, with sides as lofty, that none entering the church could know if any persons were there (even though it might be full), except at those parts of the service where all the people stand.

It may be here proper to remark, that after scraping off the many-coated whitewash, there was an appearance of coloured bordering round the arches (not fresco), but a sort of Roman ochre, exhibiting that scroll, the origin of which has been said to designate the waters, from its resemblance to the motion of waves.

And here, with respect to symbols, and ornament, and devices;—surely the suitable adornings of the church are not less incumbent on us than the bare erection of the walls. So long as we do not rest in them as objects of any vital and saving importance, they may be simply an outward act of the inward grace which prompts the building of a temple to religion. We all know the rebuke which King David received for presuming to erect a temple at all; but nevertheless we learn that his son, Solomon, was permitted to build a "house that was magnificent;" and that the temple where

* As this is not the place for expressing theological opinions, I would simply remark what I have somewhere read, "that he the shade of Christ's faith what it may, it rarely happens that the religion is in fault, but the errors which the minds of men engrave upon it."

the apostles Peter and Paul deigned to enter and preach had its "beautiful gate."

But, not to multiply instances, which, indeed, would be endless, to shew how proper it is that a church should be suitably adorned. I would quote an expression of one of our English poets, who says,—

"How lost to piety and virtue they,
Who with superfluous pageantry and pomp,
Adorn their mansions and
Neglect their God's!"

The most important marks of the antiquity of this church have yet to be noticed, viz., the formation of a *hagioscope*,* of which it may not be superfluous (as it is comparatively a new, or revived term in ecclesiology), to offer some preliminary remarks.

In one of the works published by the Cambridge Camden Society, and which has had very general circulation, the word is thus explained:—"By this term is meant those singular and not uncommon apertures which were made through the different parts of the interior walls of a church, generally on one or both sides of the chancel arch, as at St. Sepulchre's, in order that the worshippers in the aisle might be able to see 'the elevation of the host.'"

The term in general use is "squint;" that used by some ecclesiologists "foricula;" the former is every way objectionable, and the latter unmeaning; and also elevation aperture was sometimes substituted.

These apertures were usually oblong slits in the chancel wall, opening obliquely into an aisle or chantry; at Tillbrook, Beds, is an example of a chantry piscina, serving also for a hagioscope, as there likewise is at Castle Rising, in Norfolk, and at St. Mary's, Guildford, a bonafide was thus used. Standground, in Huntingdonshire, has a hagioscope on both sides of the chancel.

In early Norman churches, their place is sometimes supplied by a small one on each side of the chancel aisle, &c."

I think it is due to the rival societies of Oxford and Cambridge, whether they continue to be, or cease to be, to admit that they have done much good, in their generation, and that to their efforts may be greatly attributed the revival of our ecclesiastical architecture. They have brought to light much valuable material, and possibly having done so (seeing that would not be in their province, nor, I may add, legitimately in their power to adopt them), they may be content with the good they have achieved, and rely upon the just appreciation of their labours both by the profession and by the country.

To return to the subject of the apertures in question, which are marked on the plan, I would observe that they correspond as to their situation and direction with the examples alluded to by the Camden Society, viz., that they were squints in each side of the chancel arch, cut in an angular direction towards the high altar; but as it appears (to me) rather formed for hearing than seeing; as although their exterior was bulky, as you will perceive by the annexed engraving of the interior, at the time I speak of, was not more than 12 or 14 inches square. It is true they might have been filled up; and indeed one of them was filled up entirely. They also differ from any example I have yet heard of, in this, that they are cut an entirely through the walls of the chancel, that it became necessary to corbel out for them, and cover them over with a tiled roof. Moreover, they intersected the splayed jamb of the lancet window on one side, and on the other obliged it to be walled up. Indeed, much of these were not known in many to have existed, owing to the general decay of the church, and that it was thickly covered with ivy in many of these parts. The best interpretation that I have been able to come at is one for which I am indebted to a passing remark the other day of Mr. Stiles, and which has reminded me of other facts that serve to corroborate his opinion.

He said, with reference to these apertures, that there might have been side altars at the end of the aisle or aisles (and I believe it is in this day not uncommon in Catholic churches to have squints of that kind). Mr. Pugin, in one of his works, published 1843, exhibits such a one at St. Giles's, (Cheshire).

* Hagioscope, from the Greek *hagios*, holy, *scopos*, to view.